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AUTHOR Hudson, Kenneth
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ABSTRACT

Since World War II, European museums have abandoned their laissez-faire policy and design, and have decided to actively teach or guide visitors' learning. The position of museum educator has been created to place objects in their scientific, social, or historical context, and to help members of the public to extract the maximum meaning from these objects with the overall aim of persuading people that museums should form a normal feature of their lives. The first of seven sections of the paper describes four stages in the development of a European museum tradition. Sections two through six define museum education; the role of museum educators; the diversity of European museums (specifically looking at the legacies of Greece, Rome, Christianity, Judaism, Protestantism and humanism, absorption of the barbaric cultures, Napoleonism and post-Napoleonism, intellectual life, scientific and technical innovation, emigration, food and drink, and the two World Wars); Europeanness and museums (developing a Museum of Europe); and brief descriptions of and proposals for changes in the programs of 39 museums in 15 countries. The final section discusses the current status of museums in European countries vis-a-vis the public and their need for more emphasis on attracting visitors. (ALF)

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Museums

Treasures or tools?

Council for Cultural Co-operation
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Strasbourg, 2 April 1992

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MUSEUMS: TREASURES OR TOOLS?

STUDY

by

Mr Kenneth HUDSON
Director
European Museum of the Year Award

Strasbourg
1992

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN MUSEUM TRADITION

The museums of Europe have passed through three stages of development and are now struggling to adapt themselves to the problems an opportunities of a fourth.

Stage 1 This covered, broadly speaking, the 17th and 18th centuries. During this period, a small number of private individuals, particularly members of the aristocracy, together with religious bodies, universities and scientific institutions, began to assemble collections of historical and archaeological material, 'curiosities' and works of art. With very few exceptions, these were intended for the enjoyment and enlightenment of restricted groups of people.

Stage 2 Beginning in the last decade of the 18th century and continuing into our own times, this stage was characterised by the establishment of museums specifically for the benefit of the general public. It was helped in its earlier stages by the widespread confiscation, for political reasons, of the property of churches, monasteries and aristocratic families and, after the First and Second World Wars, by the collapse of monarchies and princely régimes and by the establishment of socialist systems of government. In certain countries, notably those affected by Napoleonic conquest and rule and, later, those which passed under the control of Communist governments, this process allowed great quantities of artistic and other cultural objects to pass into the ownership of the State and of municipalities.

In this stage of museum development, the task was usually limited to that of providing suitable buildings for storing and displaying collections and of maintaining them in good condition, restoring objects when necessary. It was rarely thought to be part of a museum's duty to organise an educational service, although schools might be encouraged to bring parties of children to certain museums and in some cases there would be gallery lectures for adults.

Stage 3 During the 1920s and 1930s, it began to be felt in a few museums that merely to possess, conserve and display objects was not sufficient. Their significance had to be explained to people who were not experts. It was gradually realised that such a task involved a special kind of skill and, in large museums, the creation of a department devoted to carrying out the Museum's educational function. This feeling that one should be using objects as well as possessing and aring for them began to be important and widely noticed earlier in the United States than in Europe. By the 1970s, however, few European museums of any size were anxious to admit that they had no kind of educational programme or activity.

Stage 4 From about 1950 onwards, the European museum world began to change in a fundamental way. Until then nearly all museums were financed and run from public funds, that is, they belonged either to the State or to a municipal or county authority. A new situation was created when foundations entered the museum field, as they did increasingly during the Sixties and Seventies. This was most marked in Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Greece, Belgium and the Federal Republic of Germany. It has not occurred to any great extent in Spain, Italy and Portugal. In Sweden museums, like schools, which are not publicly provided are regarded as almost obscene.

What one might term for convenience the foundation-museums - the name is not wholly accurate, since not all the responsible bodies are legally foundations - have had a very great influence on museum thinking and practice as a whole. In order to survive, these museums have had to be innovative and enterprising. If they failed to attract customers, they faced fairly rapid bankruptcy and it is therefore no accident that during the past thirty or forty years the foundation-museums have contributed a high proportion of the new ideas which have eventually benefitted all museums. Of necessity, they have been the risk-takers and the experimenters.

One important difference between foundation-museums and most public museums has been their location. Until the number of museums throughout Europe began to soar in the 1950s, the typical museum was in a city or a sizeable town. It was situated where it could be easily reached on foot or by public transport. The new museums, on the other hand, were a direct consequence of an increasingly motorised public. They tended to be in villages, small towns or in the open countryside, places reached easily by car or bus, but with difficulty in other ways. A great many of their visitors arrived as family parties and it was consequently essential that the museum should find ways of interesting and pleasing both children and adults.

The changes which have taken place as one moved from Stage 1 to Stage 2, from Stage 2 to Stage 3 and from Stage 3 to Stage 4, where we find ourselves at the present time, have not been wholly for the better. One could argue that the public has become less homogeneous, less serious-minded, less anxious for self-improvement. Museums have had to face up to increasing competition for people's leisure time and not infrequently the need to attract visitors has taken too much of the management's energy. Sponsorship has also affected the choice and planning of exhibitions in ways which are sometimes less than desirable.

In the larger and older-established museums, where a fairly high proportion of the staff has traditionally been engaged in what are called scholarly or research activities, the new emphasis on attracting and satisfying the general public, on the communication aspects of museum work, has not always been welcomed. In such institutions, what has often, perhaps usually, been thought of as the museum's most important work is what takes place behind the scenes, conservation, cataloguing, research. By comparison with this, interesting the general public is seen as a necessary evil. Such an attitude is probably less widepread than it used to be, but conversations which the present writer has had in recent years at, for example, the British Museum in London, the Musée du Louvre in Paris and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, show that it is by no means dead.

In every country in Europe, museums, so far as consideration for the public is concerned, have been slowly and perhaps painfully emerging from the take-it-or-leave-it atmosphere of a hundred and even fifty years ago. They have had no choice. Their acceptance b the public conditions the opinion which vote-hungry national and local politicians have of them and therefore their budgets. When finance is being debated, those museums which can show a rising curve of visitors obviously stand a better chance than those where the statistics provide evidence of stagnation or decline. The foundation-museums, of course, are all too well aware of the equation between visitors and money. One could put this another way by saying that, if the number of visitors to the British Museum were to fall by 25 per cent during the next twelve months, nobody at the Museum would lose his or her job. At the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, or the National Motor Museum, on the other hand, if such a catastrophe were to occur, the staff would have to be correspondingly reduced. There would be no money to pay them.

All over Europe, the pressure on budgets gets more severe each year, in all types and sizes of museums. In such a situation, priorities have to be carefully assessed and what were thought of as necessities yesterday become luxuries today. More than one museum has been asking recently if it really gets value from its education department. In order to answer this question, one has to be in a position to say what the essence of educational work in museums is.

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF MUSEUM EDUCATION

Of every ten museums in Europe today, nine did not exist in 1939, on the outbreak of the Second World War, and it is easy to forget what a pre-war museum looked like, how relatively few visitors it had, by comparison with today and how its visitors, both adults and children, made use of what it provided. By modern standards, it was often a deplorable place. It showed little evidence of what is now known as 'design', its graphics left a great deal to be desired, the information

given on labels tended to be of interest only to scholars and specialists and the general aim seemed to be to display as many objects to the square or cubic metre as possible. Communication skills were in their infancy. Older people remember these museums very well. Photographs, often unbelievable today, provide the evidence for those who were not around at the time.

But - and this is easy to overlook - these now-superannuated museums, which defied all modern theories relating to teaching, learning and exhibiting did none the less achieve something very important. They left the visitor free to wander as he pleased, to think his own thoughts and to discover what interested him and what did not, to learn at his own pace. One might say, on the whole, pre-Second World War museums made little attempt to teach, but offered abundant opportunities for learning. The typical 'serious' museum visitor of the 1930s usually went round the galleries on a self-help basis. He guided and taught himself. Then, as now, however, many, perhaps most, visitors were not 'serious', in the sense that they were not bent on self-improvement. They were passing the time of day, warm and dry and in a not disagreeable manner. In addition, they had usually paid nothing in order to enjoy these amenities. To have criticised what was free might have seemed both ungrateful and ungracious.

Not all of those who attended museums fifty years ago did so as volunteers. Tens of thousands of schoolchildren every year, in all European countries, were there as conscripts. They had to go, whether they liked it or not. This is, of course, still the situation. Adults, on the other hand, normally visit museums by their own choice.

Since the last war, more and more museums have abandoned this laissez-faire policy. They have decided to teach or, to put the matter more diplomatically, to guide people's learning. Theme exhibitions assume that visitors will follow a pre-arranged path which leads to understanding. Specially selected and trained 'museum educators' are on hand in order to place objects in their scientific, social or historical context and to help members of the public to extract the maximum of meaning from these objects, with the overall aim of persuading people that museums

should form a normal feature of their lives.

One could perhaps summarise the difference between the old and the new attitudes to museum visitors by saying that yesterday's policy was to let individual objects and collections speak for themselves, make their own impression, create their own interest, whereas today the approach seems rather to be one of giving visitors as much assistance as possible in following a theme and in understanding the significance of an exhibition. This reflects, of course, a change in educational theory. Previously it was believed that education implied effort and self-motivation, whereas now it is assumed that few people, whether children or adults, are capable of treading the educational path unaided and that they require help and friendly treatment before they are willing to take even the first steps. Underpinning the traditional theory was the belief that anything more than basic education is only for the few. At the root of the second approach, on the other hand, is a conviction, among its devotees, that education can and must be for everyone and that such a goal can be reached if one has enough teachers and chooses the right methods.

This is not the place to argue whether the first or the second theory corresponds more closely to reality. The change from one to the other may quite well be only a matter of fashion, but in any case one has to acknowledge that a particualr fashion exists and to make the best use one can of it. During the present century, one has lived through so many changes in educational theory and one has learnt how quickly yesterday's fashions come to be regarded as absurd and even disastrous and how passionate and normal can be the belief that today's fashions will usher in the millenium.

So much of education, in the sense of the development of the individual personality, is accidental that one sometimes marvels at the courage or the foolhardiness of anyone who sets out deliberately to 'educate' other people. One should always remember that 'education', like medicine, the law or accountancy, is an industry as well as a profession and that, as such, its practitioners will always defend its right to exist. Doctors can hardly be expected to say, or even to

believe, that organised, socially accepted medicine is not infrequently of no real benefit either to individuals or to society. Publicly expressed cynicism is also fairly rare among teachers, who earn their living as a result of a generally held belief that teachers are useful members of the community. Equally, one cannot expect the members of educational departments in museums to cut the ground from underneath their feet by saying that the world would be no worse a place if they and their work were to be abolished. In all discussions, one must always reckon with self-interest.

In order to begin to think more clearly about the problem, one has to distinguish between museum education and museum educators. The first can perfectly well exist without the second, but there are, or should be, no jobs for the second unless one believes that they make the first more likely to occur. At this point one could attempt a definition of 'museum education'. It is, one might say, the process by which an individual person is helped to widen and deepen his understanding of the world by means of objects which are displayed in museums. This definition deliberately leaves unsaid the question as to whether this process can be speeded up or made more certain and more widespread by the use of interpreters or 'educators'. Within the museum world, there is a fairly sharp division of opinion on the point.

ARE MUSEUM 'EDUCATORS' NECESSARY?

It used to be considered obvious that the more one brought into a museum in the way of knowledge and mental equipment, the more one would be able to take away from it. The statement is, however, only partly true, and subject to certain conditions. The 'mental equipment' should certainly include an enquiring mind and a willingness to abandon preconceptions, once they have been shown to be wrong. The 'knowledge' should not consist of unshakable dogmas and orthodoxies which block the way to the acquisition of further knowledge.

Within recent years, especially in Sweden, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, there has been a movement away from

the 'didactic museum', that is, the museum which sets out primarily to communicate facts and information and which sometimes comes close to defining education as the acquisition of facts. One could describe this new movement as essentially impressionistic. It believes that a museum's primary impact should be made by means of images, that is, through an appeal to the emotions, and that only after contact with visitors has been established in this way can an attempt be made to transfer information. A successful choice of images will in any case allow the museum visitor to absorb certain information without any use of words. It will, in addition, provide the emotional context which is a necessary part of learning. This new attitude to museum presentation constitutes a complete break with the previously widely-held belief that the museum has a duty to remain objective and that learning is based on the responses of the brain, not of the heart. In order to allow its collections to fulfil their rôle as communicators, they must be helped to make an emotional, as well as an intellectual appeal to the people who are confronted with them. Most of us, if we are honest, would agree that we learnt little, if anythng, during our schooldays from a teacher whom we detested. Museums are in the same situation. Their prime duty, so far as the general public is concerned, is therefore to use every means of making themselves liked, to build emotional bridges across which information can eventually cross.

Images are classless. Their impact does not depend on educational and social background. The museum visitor who sees, in a museum display, seabirds covered in crude oil or a man-made desert taking the place of a tropical forest or a religious heretic being burnt at the stake is immediately aware, without any need for words, that something has gone wrong with society at that point. Once that process has taken place, the museum-visitor is in a mood to receive supporting factual information. The first European museum to apply these impressionistic techniques was probably the Municipal Museum at Rüsselsheim, in the Federal Republic of Germany. Here, in the mid-1970s, the Curator, Peter Schirmbeck, was concerned to show how the installation and development of a large industrial plant, the Opel automobile factory, in a previously rural area had changed the

population's attitude to life. He also attempted, very successfully, to demonstrate, by using Rüsselsheim as a microcosm, the connections between social and industrial power, especially in Germany during the 19th and 20th centuries. He achieved these aims partly by skilful juxtaposition of objects and partly be employing an exceptionally talented and sympathetic designer, who understood what Schirmbeck was trying to do.

The creative designer is a crucial figure in a modern museum. Because he is an artist, he lives by images. He uses them instinctively. A successful partnership between a designer and a curator can result in a museum which is capable of enormously widening the horizons of its visitors. The museum objects are given an opportunity to deliver the message which is contained in them, but which has hitherto remained imprisoned. One sees such a partnership working very effectively in, for instance, the Museum of Coaches and Carriages at Heidenheim, in Germany, the Museum of the Ruhr Region in Essen, and in the Postal Museum and the Medieval Museum in Stockholm. These, it should be noted are all museums of cultural history. No art museum has so far had the courage to employ a designer-artist in this way, apparently in the belief that works of art carry their own message and require little or no assistance to convey it, beyond such technical aids as favourable lighting, careful choice of wall-colours and wall-textures and intelligent selection of neighbouring pictures. It would almost certainly be regarded as heretical and shocking if an artist were to be employed to provide a social and mood context for, say, one of Rembrandt's portraits or Picasso's Guernica, in the way that has been so successful in Heidenheim and in the Postal Museum in Stockholm. One wonders which museum in the world will have the courage to make the first experiments of the kind. To act in this way would lead inevitably and very desirably to a major reduction in the number of works of art on display at any one time. It might well also result in an end of the traditional habit of presenting paintings in a two-dimensional way. Each could conceivably be the focal point of a contextual exhibition, illustrating the life of the period in which it was painted.

It is arguable that a really effective museum or museum exhibition performs its own educational function and that only the inadequate exhibition requires interpretation. This amounts to saying that museum 'educators' have no real function in a well-planned museum. There is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in this, just as there is in the belief that schools would be largely unnecessary if all children had a stable environment in a good home with educated parents, which is unfortunately not the case. A great many children, and adults, however, need all the help they can get, if they are to get a foot on the ladder which leads to self-improvement and someone who can make a child happy in a museum is beyond question a useful member of society.

The matter has been carefully studied at Dulwich Picture Gallery, which is situated in an area of London where there are a great many poor homes and seriously deprived children, including a high proportion whose skin colour is not white and whose family culture is not English. The education staff at the Gallery, carefully selected and carefully trained, are able to introduce these children to a world of which they had no previous idea, a world of pleasure and fantasy which lies outside and beyond the grim business of their daily existence. It has been well said, that museums are for an élite, but that everyone should be given the opportunity to prepare themselves, by their own efforts, for membership of that élite. At the Council of Europe Symposium, held in Salzburg in September 1990, two of the speakers, Hélène Ahrweiler, President of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and Amnon Barzel, Director of the Luigi Pecci Centre for Contemporary Art at Prato, near Florence, both made this important point very strongly. Curiously, however, it was not taken up in any of the discussion periods or in the four working groups, possibly because the concept of an élite is out of fashion, despite ample evidence as to the reality and inevitability of élites in all spheres of human activity. If the two speakers had advocated a process of democratic recruitment to élites, they might perhaps have attracted more attention to what they were trying to say.

People carrying out educational work in museums believe, rightly or wrongly, that they have three principal functions. The first is to extend the number of people who learn to find pleasure in museums and who become regular visitors as a result. The second is to deepen

the understanding of those who are already members of what one might call the museum club. The third, and no less valuable than the other two , is to weaken prejudice and hostility. It would be difficult to quarrel with any of these aims, but it is possible to suggest a fourth, which most museum educators would be chary of putting into words. It is a common experience in many countries that the quality of the teaching force in schools is not what it used to be twenty or thirty years ago, and that children are suffering as a result. A variety of reasons are given for this - the social prestige of the job is low today; the breakdown of discipline in schools places teachers under enormous and often unbearable strain; pay is insufficient to attract good recruits to the profession and to allow those already in it to lead the kind of life which is necessary to support and enrich their teaching; other and more attractive work is available for the type of person who, in a previous age, would almost automatically have been drawn to teaching and who would have been anxious to spend the whole of their working life in it.

It is common, indeed normal, for people working in the education department of museums, on those programmes which have been created for children, to have previously taught in schools. Pressed hard, quite a number would admit to being refugees from school-teaching, in the sense that they find their working conditions in the museum considerably more agreeable than what was provided in the school. What these people are in fact doing is to use the museum as a substitute for the school, as a working environment. How many of them would still be school teachers if museums did not exist, it is impossible to say. What one can believe, with reasonable certainty, is that they were considerably above-average teachers, in enterprise, in imagination, in creativeness and, above all, in energy. They represent a skimming-off of the cream from the nation's school-teaching force.

This, however, is only part of the story. For reaons which one could broadly describe as social, the children concerned are getting better teaching and a more stimulating learning environment in the museum than in the school. In this sense, it might be said that the

museum is becoming, or perhaps already has become, a school-substitute. This is not wholly a modern phenomenon. The now-celebrated Palais de la Découverte in paris was created in the 1930s by a French Nobel Prize winner in an attempt to counterbalance the lack of attention to science which characterised French schools at that time. Its imaginative exhibitions and demonstrations, using university students to perform experiments, became internationally famous and, by arousing the interest of thousands of schoolchildren in the physical sciences, undoubtedly did a great deal to lay the foundations of French scientific achievement during the post-war period. In Italy, the Leonardo da Vinci Museum in Milan performed very much the same function. After 1945, and especially during the 1950s and 1960s, the Museum organised scientific courses for children, who were brought from all over Italy for the purpose and who spent several days in Milan. Competent, inspiring teachers and good equipment helped to rescue several generations of boys and girls from the low prestige which science then had in their schools.

It is not, of course, possible for museums, however well organised and however generously financed, to remedy all the defects in a country's educational system. They should not be expected to teach illiterate teenagers, of which Europe has a scandalously large number, to read and write. They cannot engage in the teaching of elementary mathematics, disastrously low as the level of numeracy may be in many places. What they can do, however, is to provide a stimulus which can make some children - one should not exaggerate possibilities - want to improve their performance in such matters. An example may help to indicate what is meant by this. Two years ago the present writer was in the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, a museum which has a considerable number of push-button operated exhibits. He got into conversation with a woman who had brought her ten-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son to the museum. Asked if it was her first visit, she replied that both she and her children came regularly and greatly enjoyed the experience, adding that her son had learnt to read in the museum. Explaining this, she said that the boy had realised very quickly that, in order to become sensibly involved in the button-pushing exercise, he had to be able to read

the instructions. This put him on the same level as other, literate children. He could see the point of reading and he learnt fast. But the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television had not been established in order to teach small boys to read. This was an unplanned by-product.

Most museum learning, whether by children or by adults, is of this nature. It is unplanned and in many cases unenvisaged by the authorities and largely accidental. One could go further and say that museums exist in order to stimulate learning, not to engage in deliberate teaching. This means, of course, providing an atmosphere in which it is easy for learning to take place. The visitor, of whatever age, must feel welcome and free to roam and to choose for himself the exhibits which interest him. His reactions cannot be guaranteed and any attempt to achieve this, by means of theme exhibitions or in any other way is both arrogant and foolish. Museum-learning is a chancy business and should remain so. One recalls the deservedly futile attempts of the Nazi and Communist régimes to use museum exhibits in order to preach an ideological message, a policy which was doomed to failure from the beginning, but which has left a disastrous legacy behind it, by giving museums the image of government tools, used to manipulate the people. In Germany, for example, the local museum, the Heimatmuseum, was used by the Nazis in the interests of their Blut und Erde - Blood and Soil - philosophy and, for a great many older people, the taint is still there. They will carry a distrust of the museum with them until they die.

One can only provide a satisfactory answer to the question, 'Are museum educators necessary?', by thinking of the ways in which a museum can educate and then estimating the extent to which specially recruited and trained experts can really help such a process. One should not automatically assume that because a profession or sub-profession exists it is necessarily useful to society. There is such a thing as activity for activity's sake and one should allow for the possibility that professionally organised museum education is an example of this. The true test of the value of museum-based courses for children is not whether children attend such courses in ever-increasing

numbers - there is a strong element of compulsion and fashion in this - but whether the same children continue to visit museums as adults, in their 20s, 30s and 40s, and that possibility takes many years to prove or disprove. Investigations in a number of countries strongly suggests that no museum has so far engaged in this kind of follow-up research. It is badly needed. It would show the extent to which the educators had succeeded in transforming the museum from enemy territory to somewhere which was regarded as friendly and normal. In museum-going as in all other activities, the example of one's parents and older relatives counts for a lot. It is extremely difficult for a child to break away from family habits. If its parents smoke, drink heavily, never read, watch television incessantly, quarrel and snatch food, rather than sit down to meals, the child is very likely to regard such habits as normal and to adopt them as he grows older. If, on the other hand, the child is brought up in what one could, for want of a better word, call and intellectual, cultured atmosphere, attention to books, music, general ideas, museums and exhibitions will appear normal. The main task of both schools and museum education departments, it might be suggested, is to make it possible for a child to lead a richer, more fulfilled, more useful life than its father and mother or, more brutally, to be better than its parents. It is, of course, more likely to be effective if the school and the museum co-operate in this process, as in many cases they do. But the low inspirational quality of many, if not most, of today's schools sets limits on this co-operation. Half-educated, uncultured teachers, who unfortunately exist in abundance everywhere today, cannot be expected to do much to raise the horizons and ambitions of their pupils. One necessarily has to concentrate on the exceptional, gifted, self-sacrificing teachers, people who are better than the system deserves and who have managed to survive despite all the hostile social and political forces ranged against them. Working with colleagues in a museum can be a great source of encouragement to such people and lessen their feeling of isolation. This is, perhaps, especially true of teachers of history. History is not a highly regarded subject in many European countries today and, compared with fifty years ago, a high proportion of children leave school very poorly equipped both so far as a sense of the importance of the past is concerned and with basic knowledge of the history of their own country. Making good this

deficiency, in the various ways open to them, is perhaps the chief task of museums today.

WHAT MAKES EUROPE SPECIAL?

There is no point in talking vaguely and piously about such things as 'European identity', 'European culture' or even 'Europe' unless one first makes clear what one is talking about. This problem was recognised, but for reasons of time, inadequately analysed, at the two important conferences organised by the Council of Europe in 1989 and 1990, the first on museums and the natural environment and the second on museums and education. One cannot very well expect museums to assist in the process of making people more aware of what it means to be a European unless one first tries to identify the qualities which give Europe its particular and peculiar flavour. Many sensitive and well-informed people have observed that it is only when he is in America that one realises how European one is, and no doubt many Americans have the reverse sensation. What are, then, the essential ingredients of the European pudding? What are the constituents of Europeanness? What is it that makes Europe something more than a bundle of different languages? No answer could be comprehensive and there is always the danger of over-simplification, but the following could perhaps be considered to be the main streams which have fed the European river.

1. The legacy of Greece The philosophy, medicine, science, theories of government, art, religion and literature of Greece, together with the special quality of its language provided Europe with a new basis for thought and activity, a new rationale for human existence. The Greek contribution to the education and mental life of Europe over a period of more than 2000 years cannot be over-estimated.

2. Rome In a sense, Rome carried on where Greece left off. The Roman pattern of conquest and colonisation, embracing all or part of 21 countries of today's Europe, the most important exceptions

being the Scandinavian countries and Russia, helped to introduce Greek thinking, often in a modified, Romanised form, to regions where the original version had never penetrated and added many creative concepts and practical innovations of its own, in such fields as government, the law, military organisation, building construction, roads, technology, shipbuilding and navigation, and commercial organisation.

The Latin language bound Europe together for many centuries. Cultured people wrote in it, the practice and organisation of the Catholic Church demanded it, the Romance languages were its children, education was rooted in it. Latin, and to a lesser extent, Greek, was at the centre of learning and scholarship.

Most important of all, the empire built up by Rome provided Europe with a model and a dream of unity which it never lost, even during its worst periods of war, semi-barbarism and disorganisation.

3. Christianity What is now Israel and was once Palestine may have been the birthplace of Christianity, but it was Europe which gave it its present character and its institutions and Europe which provided the stamina and the motivation for it to take root in the other continents of the world. The Christian Church and the beliefs on which it was founded have been an essential ingredient in the making of European civilisation. All the white inhabitants of Europe today are at least residual Christians. Their values and their ethical codes are essentially those of the Christian Church and even those non-white immigrants, of whom Europe now contains many millions, have had to modify their behaviour, consciously or unconsciously, to allow them to live satisfactorily within a social and political atmosphere which owes so much to Christian faith and practice. A high proportion of white Europeans no longer engages in any form of Christian worship, but even they cannot escape from their Christian past. The symbols of it are everywhere, in the form of old churches, monasteries - mostly used now for other purposes - educational establishments and the enormous quantities of religious art of all kinds which occupy so much space

in our museums, galleries and libraries.

4. Judaism Jewish faith and practice constitutes one of the most powerful and creative elements in the history and civilisation of Europe. From the Middle Ages onwards, no European country has been without its Jewish community. The contribution of Jewish people to the cultural, commercial and political development of Europe is inestimable. This contribution has been continuously resented and frequently opposed in the most violent ways, so much so that one could even say that anti-semitism has been an omnipresent European disease which has helped to bind the continent together. But there can be no doubt that, in both its positive and its negative aspects, Judaism has been a most important ingredient of the European pudding.

5. Protestantism and humanism It is natural and helpful to consider these two movements together, since both constitute attempts to fight against the excesses of religious authority and to assert the right of man to think for himself. The fact that Protestantism in its turn produced authoritarian systems is one of history's frequent paradoxes. It does not alter the fact that for many centuries there has been in Europe a steady undercurrent of movements which stood for human liberty and which rested on a fundamental respect for the individual. This passionate belief was, in its origins, essentially European. Other societies have placed a supreme value on group interestes and on social considerations. The European emphasis on individual rights grew slowly and was often savagly repressed, but it always survived and it has given a special meaning to the word 'European'.

6. The absorption of barbaric cultures For two hundred years and more, European archaeologists have been discovering and trying to interpret the remarkable pattern of prehistoric and pagan cultures which represented human society in Europe before the reshaping of attitudes and organisations by the Greeks, Romans and the Christian Church. The total effect of these researches has been

to demonstrate the extent to which the new cultures absorbed their predecessors. Christianity, for example, became very different in Ireland, from what it was in Italy or Sweden and Romanised society in Britain had a different character from what one saw in Spain. Theoretically the institutions were the same, but the cultural substrata on which they rested gave them a different character. The interpenetration of the old and the new, especially during the first millenium A.D., is one of the most fascinating and fruitful studies of the development of Europe.

7. Napoleonism and post-Napoleonism After Napoleon, Europe was never the same. No country was unaffected by the activities of this man, who was, according to one's point of view, either a person of superhuman and heroic stature or one of the half-dozen greatest criminals in history. One can draw attention to the appalling misery and suffering he caused throughout Europe, not least to his own people, one can discuss his attempts to create a single European political order, based on Paris, one can think of his megalomania and personal vanity, common to all dictators, one can assess the long-term effects of his looting of Europe's art treasures and of the prestige which he gave to militarism and to national and imperial glory. One can see him as a source of chauvinism and as a European force from which both Hitler and Mussolini drew inspiration. What one certainly cannot do is to forget him. He is an essential factor in the development and character of modern Europe.

8. Europe's intellectual life Europe has been given cohesion by its great philosophers, artists and musicians. In combination, these are European culture. It is not difficult to draw up a list of the giant-sized figures, people of the stature of Erasmus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, Rembrandt, Picasso, Mozart and Tolstoy, people who, whether they are aware of the fact or not, are part of the culture of everyone alive in Europe today. One should be careful to distinguish between culture and heritage. The two words are frequently, perhaps normally, used as if they were interchangeable,

whereas there is, in fact, a profound and important difference between them. One's heritage is everything which has been built, written, created, composed, painted in one's own country. The sources of one's culture, on the other hand, can be found in any country.

So, since I am English, Shakespeare, Westminster Abbey and Abraham Darby's furnace at Coalbrookdale are part of both my culture and my heritage, whereas Goethe, Rembrandt and the Forum in Rome are part of my culture, but not of my heritage. If I were German, Goethe would belong to my heritage and my culture but, as things stand, he has to rest content with being only part of my culture.

Scientific and technical innovation and achievement From the medieval period onwards, Europe has been the world's principal centre of scientific and technical innovation. The major discoveries and developments in astronomy, medicine, metal processing, mining, manufacturing technology, photography, electronics, chemistry, plant-breeding, physics and communications were made in Europe and it is only during the present century that other parts of the world, notably the United States and Japan, have begun to overhaul Europe in the scientific and technical fields. In America, but not Japan, a great deal of the scientific progress which has been achieved has been a result of the work of Europeans who decided to emigrate to America.

Railways were a European development and industrialisation was exported from Europe to the rest of the world.

Emigration People emigrate either because they are desperate or because they are anxious to better their lot in some way. Both kinds of people left Europe in large numbers from the 16th century onwards, especially during the 19th and 20th centuries. Australasia and both North and South America were heavily colonised by Europeans and countries within these regions carry a strong European imprint. A very important common quality of the countries

of Europe has been their function in providing emigrants to settle the thinly-populated areas of the rest of the world. It is often forgotten that until 1945 a number of European countries which now rank as among the most prosperous in the world - Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway - contained substantial numbers of people for whom life was very difficult and who joined those from the traditionally poor countries - Poland, Russia, Greece, Southern Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria - which had been a major source of hardworking, cheap labour for North America for generations.

Food and drink Despite significant national and regional differences and despite a steady process of Americanisation in the world's diet and in the ways in which food and drink are processed, packaged and sold, there is still something which one can call a European pattern of eating and drinking. The European town still has a centre and the European city a cluster of centres. The American town sprawls, centre-less, in a way that Europeans find perplexing. The concentration of cafés, restaurants, small shops and hotels around a recognisable town centre has virutally disappeared in the United States and it is on the way out in Canada and Australia. It is only in Europe that one can reckon to stroll around a town centre, buying what one needs from specialist shops and picking and choosing among the cafés and restaurants on offer. American bars tend to be straight drinking places. The European-style café has found great difficultures in crossing the Atlantic.

Europe has been defined as a continent where people still eat with a knife in one hand and a fork in the other and there is a good deal of truth in the remark. Fork-eating is a very American habit, although it has shown signs of spreading to and within Europe in recent years, although always on the upper and upper-middle class levels. Fork-eating, as a deeply entrenched social habit, unites North America, as knife-and-fork eating does Europe. Europe is also a bread-eating continent, where people of all classes continue to find bread important, at a time when Americans are abandoning it in favour of sweeter, cake and bun-like fare. It

could be said, too, that Europeans have always shown a particular devotion to fish. They eat much more of it than Americans or Australians do.

9. Two World Wars The 1914-18 and the 1939-45 Wars, directly involving every country in Europe, with the exception of Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland and the Iberian peninsula, gave the continent a common basis of suffering which is not easily forgotten and, coupled with the equally widespread experience of German occupation, added a new dimension to the meaning of the word 'European'. Millions of soldiers and civilians found themselves fighting, working and imprisoned outside their own country. A concentration camp could hold, at any one time, men and women from a dozen or more countries. Ukrainians were buried in the Channel Islands, Poles in Italy and Germans in France. The European cauldron boiled over and its contents flowed across national boundaries. It became increasingly natural to think of Europe as one place.

It is not difficult to add to the list of the features of European history and civilisation which, in combination, give Europe its special flavour, its special bundle of qualities. The nine mentioned above, however, would seem to be of outstanding importance. By comparison, such characteristics as climate, language, architecture, flora and fauna, and the physical appearance of the continent's inhabitants are too regional and too varied to be entitled to the label 'European'.

EUROPEANNESS AND MUSEUMS

There is at present no European Museum, although there probably will be before many years have elapsed. Its purpose would presumably be to illustrate the different threads which, over the centuries, have been woven into the cultural carpet which we call Europe. What would seem to be the most important of these threads have been briefly described above.

Where such a museum should be located is a matter for discussion and probably heated argument. One choice might be Brussels, the

headquarters of the European Community, and another Strasbourg, the seat of the Council of Europe. Both of these two places, it could be felt, are rather too obvious and unlikely to stir the imagination a great deal. A capital city is probably to be avoided, since it would provoke too many national rivalries. A fairly large provincial city might be a better choice. Salzburg, close to the centre of Europe and at the point where a major East-West route crosses one running North and South, would understandably have its claimants and so would Charlemagne's capital, Aachen. A case could also be made for Liverpool, from where so many of Europe's surplus population found their way to the New World, carrying European traditions and habits with them, for Kraków, a notable melting-pot of Slav and German culture, and for one of the historic trading ports - Hamburg, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Genoa, Venice.

Twelve years ago an interesting and imaginative attempt was made by the then head of the European Community's Cultural Department, Robert Grégoire, to set up a network of what were to be called European Rooms in museums throughout the Community's Europe. Only one such Room was in fact established, in the Castle Museum, Norwich. Carefully researched and attractively presented, the exhibition illustrated the links which had existed since prehistoric times between Norfolk, of which Norwich is the county town, and continental Europe. It was an excellent idea, which worked well, but it died with the retirement of the man who thought it up. The Room, a corner of the Castle Keep, still exists and it constitutes a kind of test-bed for the planning and construction of a Museum of Europe.

While one is waiting for a Museum of Europe or for a sucessor for the European Room at Norwich, a sensible step would be to enquire how existing museums might be, so to speak, Europeanised. This would involve, in effect, re-interpreting the objects on display in a way which would make clear their international significance. It would also mean that museums which had collections suited to this European purpose would have to create an introductory exhibition explaining the idea of Europe, as a cultural concept, and showing in what ways this particular museum illustrated that concept.

With this in mind, it would be extremely helpful if the Council of Europe were to commission and publish a booklet which set out what we have called above, 'the ingredients of the European pudding', and which invited directors and curators to consider their museums and collections in a new light. There would be no suggestion that a museum which could illustrate only a single theme was inferior to one which concerned itself with several. What would be stressed is the essential inter-dependency of the regions and countries of Europe, the way in which the civilisation and organising ability of Rome affected most of Europe and left behind these relics, now museum objects, here and there; the movement of new mining technology, away from Bohemia, where it began, westwards and northwards across Europe; with the revolution in textile manufacturing tracking from England in the opposite direction. What one is asking is that museum exhibits shall increasingly be presented within a European context, instead of in a cultural vacuum, as they mostly are at present.

As an excellent example of this, one could instance the recently opened Moorland and Peat Museum, at Heidenreichstein in Austria, a small museum in a small town. The museum shows the plants and wildlife of the local moors, tells the story of the successful movement to prevent the peat industry from extending its activities and indicates, by means of maps and photographs, the huge areas of Europe which are faced with a similar problem, the message being that if the citizens of a small Austrian town can act responsibly in order to save the natural environment from destruction, so too can the inhabitants to similar areas in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, the Soviet Union and elsewhere. By means of such an approach, a local museum is able to add greatly to its significance and appeal.

One should point out, however, that not all museums have similar opportunities. It would require great ingenuity to discover a European dimension in the Slate Museum at Holthausen in Germany, where the collections consist of works by the painter and sculptor, Eugen Senge-Platen, who used slate as a material for his work. The same could be said with confidence of the Laurel and Hardy Museum at Ulverston, in England, which is devoted to the career of the comedians, Stanley

Laurel and Oliver Hardy. Both of these museums are no doubt admirable in their own way, but they add little to our understanding of the development of European culture. On the other hand, the Museum of the Risorgimento at Asti would benefit from placing the Italian Risorgimento alongside other 19th-century struggles for national independence in Europe, and the Silver Mine Museum at Kongsberg in Norway could be made more interesting and more significant by the addition of a map of Europe showing th distribution of silver mines in Europe from medieval times onwards and the places where superior techniques for extracting and refining the ore began.

Most museums are absurdly self-contained. It is rare to find any reference in them to similar collections elsewhere in the same country, let alone abroad. The international approach to museum collections is very rare. Visitors are not often encouraged to broaden their experience by going to see other museums, which seems both strange and short-sighted, since the museum-going habit is greatly nourished by variety and by the opportunity to compare one museum to another. Of necessity, it is not possible for most people to visit more than a limited number of museums each month or each year and it is therefore very desirable that one museum should, in effect, represent as many others of the same kind as possible. Each transport museum or costume museum has a duty to show how it fits nto the general European pattern and to make a number of general points about fashion or peasant conservatism or railway travel in Europe, in addition to illustrating the scene within its own geographical area. A Swiss-made mouthorgan is all the more interesting as a result of being on show among mouthorgans made in other countries as at the Mouthorgan Museum in Utenberg, but this particular museum would probably not be a front-ranking candidate for inclusion in a list of museums which could be usefully re-interpreted from a European angle.

One cannot, of course, expect a museum to do everything for its visitors. If people arrive knowing nothing or next to nothing about the historical processes which have made Europe what it is today, a single visit to even the best of museums is not going to remedy the situation. What a museum can do is whet the appetite, to bring its

visitors to the point at which they are willing to make the effort to learn more. It can stimulate, it can guide, but it cannot provide instant understanding. Obviously, ten visits can accomplish more than one, just as regular attendance at courses offered by a museum's education department should do more than listening to one gallery lecture. But it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the main responsibility for providing incentives to learning rests with the museum itself, not with its education department. If the collections are presented in an unimaginative and unattractive way and if they contain little popular appeal, museum educators are building on sand.

It may be useful at this stage in the discussion to suggest a short list of museums in each country which are particularly suitable for re-presentation from a European point of view. These lists should not be considered as anything more than a collection of examples. What is being advocated is a change of attitude on the part of museum curators, an end of parochialism, so that visitors are encouraged to think of every exhibit within a wider European context. It is, of course, neither possible nor desirable to do this a hundred times within each gallery. All that is required is the provision of carefully chosen clues, discreet signposting, to the fact that the meaning of many objects is more than local, more than national. It could be suggested that at least two-thirds of Europe's museums would respond to this treatment and that every major museum would benefit from having a European Room, organised along the lines of what has already been achieved at Norwich Castle.

SOME COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY PROPOSALS

Austria

Admont: Art Museum of the Benedictine Monastery

The Benedictines founded monasteries throughout Europe and members of the order moved a good deal between the various houses.

They were major landowners and accumulated great art collections and libraries. Admont was one of the wealthier monasteries and its library is particularly remarkable. Other important foundations in Austria were at Kremsmünster, Melk, Michaelbeuren and Salzburg. All are now museums. At Kremsmünster visitors an hardly fail to be impressed by the immense size of the library, which is 65 metres long. The library at another celebrated monastery at Herzogenburg can also hardly be ignored, containing as it does nearly 80,000 volumes and a very important collection of medieval manuscripts.

The re-orientation of the Benedicine monastery collections, in Austria and elsewhere, would take three forms. Each individual museum would have a large map, showing all the Benedictine foundations within Europe and indicating which of them are accessible to the public. Whenever members of the public visited these monastery museums, they would be given a clear indication of the extent of the monastery's land-holdings, of the number of people it employed at its peak and, if it were no longer a functioning institution, for what reasons its life had come to an end.

Vienna: Exhibition of the Former Court Collections of Tableware and Silver

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, before its dismemberment in 1919, as a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles, included Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia and part of Poland. This represented a very large part of Europe and helped to balance the power of Germany on the one side and Russia on the other. Its destruction and the re-distribution of territory which followed produced an economic and political situation in central Europe which grew steadily more and more unsatisfactory, culminating, first, in the rise of the National Socialist Empire and then in the rise and fall of Communist government in most of the countries which were carved out of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

This lesson in basic European history should be familiar to every European citizen, but it would be highly optimistic to believe that this is in fact the case. Museums should certainly be used to improve the

position. One easy and not unpleasant way in which the task might be carried out would be to add what one might call simple context-exhibitions to each of the many museums in Austria which document the pomp, power and wealth of the old Empire. At present, these museums are almost wholly nostalgic and the time has surely come to inject a little more realism and historical perspective into them, along the lines suggested above.

Apart from the museum devoted to the Court Collections of Tableware and Silver, which has already been instanced, one thinks particularly of the Emperor Franz Josef's Villa, at Bad Ischl, the numerous museums devoted to the achievements of various regiments in the Imperial Army, and the great Imperial palaces in Vienna, in the Belvedere, the Hofburg and Schönbrunn. To these one should certainly add the Museum of Young Bosnia in Sarajevo, now part of Yugoslavia, from where the shot was fired which killed the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28th June 1914 and sparked off the 1914-18 War.

By including museums in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and elsewhere in Yugoslavia one could construct a Museum Trail of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Publicised as an entity, it could be a useful way of communicating a sense of European history.

Eisenstadt: Haydn Museum

No country in Europe is more richly endowed than Austria with museums commemorating the nation's musical heritage. Among them are the Anton Bruckner Museum at Ansfelden, the Villa of Franz Lehár at Bad Ischl, Haydn's Birthplace and Museum at Rohrau, Mozart's Birthplace in Salzburg and, in Vienna, the Beethoven Memorial Museum, the Johann Strauss House-Museum and the Schubert Museum. These museums are all presented individually. What is missing is any attempt to show that the presence in Austria of so many composers of outstanding talent was not accidental, but the result of the demands of the Imperial Court and the aristocracy associated with it. Put more crudely, the musicians went where the patronage and the money were. They were

by-products of an Imperial form of government, many members of which had cultivated tastes, or who felt it to be their duty to pretend they had.

At these museums, the visitor is left to deduce this kind of information for himself. No-one mentions Haydn's Birthplace at the Schubert Museum and nothing is said about Mozart at the Haydn Memorial. Each composer is displayed in his own separate compartment and sordid topics like politics and economics are usually kept safely out of the way, although there may be occasional hints that Mozart was underpaid and that Beethoven was in debt to his landlady.

Museums of this type badly need a connecting thread, an extra dimension to bind them into the history of Europe.

Belgium

Waterloo: Wellington Museum

For its size, Belgium is almost certainly the most fought-over country in Europe. Enormous damage to its towns and villages and its historic buildings took place during the First and Second World Wars and, if there were to be thoughts of establishing a European Museum of Wartime Destruction, Belgium would be a strong candidate to accommodate it. It has a number of museums which commemorate its rôle as an international battlefield. The Wellington Museum comes closest to deserving the title of a truly European Museum. A spell of test-questioning people at random in France and Great Britain has revealed to the present author the fact that the general opinion is that the Battle of Waterloo was fought beteween the British army, under the control of the Duke of Wellington, and the French army, led by Napoleon. The Museum which is located in Wellington's battle headquarters and is much visited by tourists, performs a great service in helping to set the record straight by illustrating the fact that troops from many countries were involved. The public and the Press, however, always preferred a personalised version of what took place, so that the battle

has come down to posterity as Wellington versus Napoleon.

In its account of the progress and results of the Battle of Waterloo, and in its total freedom from heroics and glory-searching, the Museum sets a new standard for military museums. The difference between it and the Musée de l'Armée in Paris is enormous. In Paris, the Battle of Waterloo receives almost no mention. Napoleon is there in its displays in 1814 and he reappears in 1816, but in 1815 he is mysteriously absent. The other military museums in Belgium - the Museum of the 1944 Battle of the Ardennes at Bastogne and Spa, Zeebrugge Museum and Fort Breendonk at Willebrock - are not of the same quality as the one at Waterloo. They lack the objectivity and detachment which are required in order to make them museums for Europe and not for a single country.

Of all types of museum, Europe's military museums are most in need of thorough-going reorganisation in order to make them educational tools, rather than agencies of nostalgia and nationalism.

Antwerp: Plantin-Moretus House

It is arguable that, from a cultural point of view, the two most important museums are the Plantin-Mortus House in Antwerp and the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, the second because it commemorates, in his original 15th-century printingshop, the pioneerng work of the man who first developed the skill of printing from moveable type, and the first because, in the printing house and foundry owned by Christopher Plantin and his successors between 1555 and 1876, the art of designing and casting type was raised to new levels. Printing was almost certainly Europe's greatest gift to the world. It allowed ideas and information to be disseminated to a degree which had previously been impossible.

Yet, excellent and interesting as these two museums are, they hold back from making this point with the force it demands. Neither is precisely a modest museum, but both concentrate rather too much on the genius of individuals and rather too little on the advance in

communication for which these two men and their printing houses were responsible. Curiously, neither museum mentions the other. Europe has many museums devoted to printing and to the production of books and newspapers. Since it is Europe where printing was born and grew up, it would seem that a booklet describing these museums and indicating their importance would be fully justified. It would certainly be helpful if each of them knew of the existence of the others, which at the moment appears doubtful.

Brussels: The House of Erasmus

The great Dutch philosopher and scholar, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), of who it was said that he 'laid the egg which Luther hatched', was born in Rotterdam, where there is no museum to him, and studied and taught all over Europe. The museum in Brussels occupies the house where he lived during the later years of his life. It contains collections of material relating to him and to other humanists of the 15th and 16th centuries. Humanism has been one of the major driving forces of European civilisation, with Erasmus as one of its greatest figures. It has been represented at different periods by the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution and the struggle for democracy and national independence. Its central beliefs have included freedom from ecclesiastical authority, the liberation of the intellect, faith in progress and the conviction that man can and should improve his own condition, without supernatural help.

Humanism and humanists are poorly represented among Europe's museums, which, considering the profound and widespread influence which they have had throughout the continent, would appear curious and unjust. One might perhaps consider the upgrading of Erasmus's House in Brussels to give it the international status it deserves, both as a symbol and as an active philosophical centre.

Denmark

Odense: Hans Andersen's House

Few writers have had their works translated into more languages than Hans Christian Andersen and few have received more decorations from foreign governments. His Fairy Tales, with their unmistakably European settings, have given pleasure to several generations of both children and adults all over the world. Together with the museums devoted to the Brothers Grimm in Germany, in Kassel and at Steinau-an-der-Strasse, Hans Andersen's House at Odense is a memorial to one of Europe's most successful commercial enterprises, the export of fairytales, although the profits over the years have benefitted the publishers more than its authors. Although Andersen's stories are very different in theme and atmosphere from those of the Brothers Grimm, both are unmistakably European. As a result of translation, they have become part of the common European culture. The point needs to be put more forcefully and convincingly at all these museums.

Copenhagen: National Museum

In 1813, the Danish scholar, Vedel Simonsen, published his theory of the Three Ages of prehistory, the Ages of stone, bronze and iron. This revolutionised the theory and practice of archaeology, both of which had previously been in a state of chaos, with no basis for arranging archaeological collections in a logical and systematic way. The first Curator of the National Museum, Christian Jurgensen Thomsen, organised the Museum's archaeological collections in accordance with the Three Age theory. The National Museum was opened to the public in 1918. It was the first archaeological museum anywhere to be arranged systematically and revolutionised the study of archaeology throughout the world.

What took place at the National Museum in Copenhagen was probably the most significant single contribution to archaeology ever made. Almost overnight, prehistoric archaeology began to make sense. There is little in the Museum today to give the visitor a sense of being where a revolution in scholarship took place, although the results of that revolution are evident all over Europe and indeed all over the world. Once again, an important dimension in presentation is missing.

Finland

Helsinki: Mannerheim Museum

To a foreigner, the attitude of the Finns towards its neighbour, the Soviet Union, is likely to seem very strange. Although Finland fomed part of Russia from 1809 until 1918, after several centuries of Swedish rule, and although it was forced to yield territory to the Soviet Union after bitter fighting in 1939-40 and to make further territorial concessions in 1944, it has since carried the principle of neutrality so far that Russian is little taught in schools and universities and the Finnish people rarely mention the Soviet Union in conversation. They walk past statues of Czars in Helsinki apparently without noticing them.

Finland's Russian past is, however, reflected in a number of its museums, especially those connected with military history and with the culture of the regions which were once Finnish and are now Russian. The most notable symbols of the struggles against Russia are the Mannerheim Museum and the Mannerheim Memorial in Helsinki. In the first, visitors can follow the career of the Marshal, which began in the Czarist army and ended as a national hero in the bitter fighting against the Soviet army in 1939. The museum, in Mannerheim's former home, has a truly European dimension, in a country which is usually banished to the political fringes of Europe. The Mannerheim Memorial, a great wall bearing the names of the thousands of Finnish soldiers who died during the 1939-40 war, is a further reminder of the rôle that Finland played as an unwilling participant in the power struggle between Germany and the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

Bobäck: Hvitträsk

During the late 19th and the whole of the 20th centuries, the influence of Finnish architects in Europe and throughout the world has been remarkable. The building complex at Hvitträsk was designed by the partnership of Eliel Saarinen, Herman Gisellius and Armas Lindgren

and built in 1902. Their office, established in 1896, already had an international reputation, especially for the Finnish pavilion at the 1900 Paris World Fair. The partners and their staff lived at Hvitträsk and it was here that the plans were worked out for a number of Finland's great 20th-century buildings, including Helsinki Railway Station and the National Museum of Finland. The main building, containing Saarinen's studio and furniture, is now a museum.

At Jyväsklä there is a museum commemorating the achievements of another of Finland's great architects, Alvar Aalto, in a building designed by himself and in Helsinki the Museum of Finnish Architecture has collections illustrating the history of architecture in Finland, with an emphasis on the 20th century. Visitors to the three museums mentioned here are left in little doubt that modern Finnish architects have had an international influence which is out of all proportion to the size of their country. The important question as to why this happened is left largely unanswered. Why, when a European discusses modern architecture and modern architects, does he almost automatically think first of Finland?

Pohja: Iron Museum

This is the museum of one of Finland's most important industrial concerns, Oy Fiskars. It tells the story of the iron industry at Billnäs, which operated from the 17th century onwards. There are collections of axes, spades and other tools made at the forge, which used charcoal as a fuel, wood being a material which Finland has in abundance Another museum of a similar kind is at Ruotsinpyhtäa. The Stromfors Works Museum is in a 19th-century bar-iron works, which functioned from 1695 to 1950 and was the last works in Finland to use the technique of forging by means of waterwheel-operated hammers.

There are at least two hundred iron museums in Europe. They form a network of fundamental technology which binds the continent together and it is curious that no-one seems so far to have considered forming an association around them or of engaging in co-operative publicity.

France

Ajaccio: National Museum of the House of the Bonapartes

Two-thirds of the countries of Europe have museums devoted as a whole or in part to the career and legacy of Napoleon Bonaparte, a token of the political, military and economic influence which he exercised as a person for nearly a quarter of a century and as a myth and a cult for much longer. The Museum of the Army in Paris revolves around the concept of military glory, which had its roots in the Napoleonic myth and in the creation of great national and imperial armies during the 19th century the shadow and example of Napoleon were never far away. Somewhat curiously, no museum has yet attempted the task of presenting an objective picture of what Napoleon did to France and to Europe, of what he left behind him after his death and of his rôle in accelerating processes which had already begun. It is still too soon to think of an impartial museum presentation of the other notable figure, Adolf Hitler, who made an attempt to unite Europe by force, but one would reckon that Napoleon has been dead long enough for such a venture to be possible.

Alise-Sainte-Reine: Alésia Museum

Alise-Sainte-Reine was the Roman town of Alésia. It was here that Julius Caesar defeated the army of the Gaulish leader, Vercingetorix, in a battle which decided the future of Gaul and of Rome. It was a turning point in the history of Europe, a fact which is inadequately brought out in the two museums, the Alésia Museum and the Municipal Museum, which displays archaeological material from the site of the Gallo-Roman town. It is interesting to see exhibits of the weapons, coins and other objects discovered in the trenches dug by Caesar's troops, but the real importance of this material is not intrinsic, but as a token of a permanent shift of military and political power.

It is unfortunately rare in museums to find an assessment of the importance of this or that battle. Culloden, the scene of the defeat of the army led by the Jacobite Pretender, Prince Charles Edward

Stuart, is a notable exception and almost a model of how the task should be tackled.

Paris: Museum of the Pasteur Institute

Few people, European or otherwise, can be described, without hesitation or qualification, as major benefactors of mankind. Europe certainly has two of them, Edward Jenner, the English country doctor who discovered the first effective vaccine against smallpox, and Louis Pasteur, the 19th-century French chemist and microbiologist, who made great advances in the prevention and treatment of diseases caused by micro-organisms. Both have museums devoted to them, Jenner at Berkeley in Gloucestershire, and Pasteur in Paris and at the homes of his parents in Arbois and Dole. Both are admirable in the way in which they tell the story of the lives of the two men and in putting their scientific work in its historical context. Neither makes the point, however, that the central figures of the Pasteur and the Jenner Museum were working at a time when scientific research, especially in the biological field, was almost a European preserve, although towards the end of Pasteur's lifetime the Americans were beginning to make significant contributions, although technical innovation continued to be their strongest point. For the first three-quarters of the 19th century, however, Europe was the scientific powerhouse of the world.

Beaune: Museum of the Wines of Burgundy

Sixteen European countries produce wines on a serious scale and in most of these wine is a major industry. The production and consumption of wine is part of European culture and has been since Roman times. Every wine-producing country has at least one museum devoted to the history and techniques of the industry. France does better than most in this respect, with important and, in most cases, charming wine museums at, among other places, Beaune, Cognac and Epernay, with a particularly interesting museum on Wine and the Vine in Art at one of the most famous of all vineyards, the Château Mouton-

Rothschild at Pauillac in the Gironde. With a dozen wine museums in Italy and about the same number in Spain, Europe can muster something like 150 museums which are concerned with wine. All of them are, however, extremely national, not to say regional affairs. Competition within the wine industry today is such that no country wishes to give publicity to another country's wines. Consequently, there is no museum or trade centre to which the ordinary citizen can go in order to obtain an objective overview of the history and characteristics of the wines of Europe, nowhere that allows him to see the wood for the trees.

Paris: Orsay Museum

From the middle of the 19th century until the beginning of the First World War, France was Europe's artistic paradise, the place where the artists of every European country yearned to live and work. The Orsay Museum in Paris provides as good a general survey as any of what was actually produced in this French paradise, within a building which communicates much of the flavour of the period. What it fails to do - and for this one must rely on one's reading - is to account satisfactorily for the extraordinary fascination which France had for foreign artists of all ages during this golden period. Was it the fact that artists of exceptional talent and originality were abnormally thick on the ground and created a stimulating atmosphere around themselves? Was it the prestige which artists enjoyed in France, comparable to the favour given to architects in Finland? Was it something about the quality of social life in France, very different from what one found in Holland or Germany or Sweden, which freed the artist from inhibitions and restraints? Why did Europe's fledgling artists flock in such numbers to France in General and to Paris in particular? The absence of answers to these questions is a major defect in the Orsay Museum, which concerns itself too little with artists and too much with art.

But, Paris and the Orsay Museum apart, France is remarkably richly endowed with museums devoted to 19th and 20th-century artists. The Rodin and Toulouse-Lautrec Museums in Paris, the Museum of the

Barbizon School at Barbizon, the Claude Monet Museum in his former home at Giverny, the Renoir Museum at Cagnes-sur-Mer and the Matisse Museums at Le Cateau-Cambrésis and at Nice are only a few of them and, in any case, they represent only half the story. The works by these artists and their contemporaries which found their way in their hundreds to museums all over Europe allowed France to extend its cultural tentacles far beyond its own borders.

Germany

Frankfurt: Goethe House and Museum

There are a few, a very few, European writers and thinkers - Shakespeare, Dickens, Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, Rousseau, Molière, Voltaire - whose reputation has never fluctuated since their death and who have continued to communicate with generation after generation of readers. All of these larger-than-life figures have museums dedicated to them, nearly always in houses where they were born or where they lived for a part of their life. Goethe's family home in Frankfurt is of this type. Goethe devotees make a point of paying their respects to the great man there and, after the political changes of 1989 and 1990, it is now easier for them to visit the house in Weimar, known as Goethe's Garden House, where the poet and philosopher lived between 1776 and 1782.

These devotion-pilgrimages are an essential part of the cultural life of Europe and one of the great tragedies of the past fifty years has been the extent to which first war and then the closed-frontier policy of the Communist societies have prevented such pilgrimages from taking place. In some instances - Stratford-upon-Avon is an extreme example - the annual flood of people which descends on one of these cultural shrines is so large that its organisation takes on the form of an industry, as was indeed the case with religious pilgrimages in the Midddle Ages and with pilgrimages to Lourdes today.

One does not have to assume that all pilgrims are equally well

informed about the subjects of their pilgrimage. Many, no doubt, travel to these because it is a fashionable thing to do, others because they go where the tourist companies take them. To grade pilgrims in this way is not important or particularly useful, however. What really matters is that a number of leading names within the European cultural field - writers, philosophers, artists, musicians, actors - should be part of a common European currency. A shared repertoire of names helps to link one country to another. For most people, it is quite sufficient to know the name of Goethe or Shakespeare and to have some idea of what he did. To visit his former home is a useful bonus. It adds a dimension of reality to the name and converts those who have trodden the same floors that he trod into members of an international circle of aficionados.

Frechen: Museum of Ceramics

Frechen today is little more than an outer suburb of Cologne, but by Roman times it had become one of the most important pottery manufacturing centres in Europe. From the 15th to the late 19th century, its stoneware was exported very widely to north-west, central and northern Europe, the jugs bearing the image of a bearded man being particularly popular. Pottery manufacturing continues in Frechen today.

The frequent finds of Frechen pottery of all periods at widely scattered archaeological sites in Europe serves as a reminder of the extent of international trade in Europe before the coming of the railways and when road transport was still difficult. For centuries, the commerce on which Frechen depended for its prosperity used the Rhine and its tributaries as its trunk routes. The presence of Frechen pottery far from the place where it was made and often in the most unlikely places is striking efficiency of the importance of Europe's network of waterways in the days before the coming of mechanised transport systems.

Cologne: Romano-Germanic Museum

Cologne was one of the most important provincial towns in the

Roman Empire. Since the Second World War, a large museum has been established close to the Cathedral and near the site of Roman wharves on the Rhine, in order to display the huge variety of objects relating to the life of the area during the years when Cologne was controlled from Rome and, afterwards, when Germanic tribes absorbed the Roman legacy and made their own contribution to the culture of the region. The great medieval cathedral which adjoins the Museum serves as a powerful reminder of the continuity of European civilisation which Cologne has represented over a period of more than 2000 years. Nowhere in Europe is this essential continuity more strikingly demonstrated than in Cologne. The severe damage caused to the city and its cathedral by Allied bombing during the Second World War carries the story forward into our own times and presents National Socialism and its results as a later link in a cultural chain which began with the Romans.

Stuttgart: Daimler-Benz Museum

The Daimler-Benz Museum is complemented by the Gottfried Daimler Memorial Museum in the same city. Together they show the immense contribution made by Daimler and his associates to the development of automobile engineering. The first museum displays Daimler-Benz vehicles of the 1880s, together with Gottfried Daimler's first experimental workshop, complete with original and replica tools and equipment.

Europe has many museums devoted to the history of the automobile, some on the premises used by the pioneers. The American rôle was to carry the manufacture of cars through its early stages as a mass-production industry, but all the early technical developments took place in Europe, more particularly in France, Germany and England. The motorcar was a European invention and the automobile museum which does not make this point clear is failing in its duty. What most museums also do not explain at all or explain very inadequately is that until the outbreak of the First World War hundreds of firms in Europe were making cars and commercial vehicles, on a semi-workshop basis. It was only when the size of the market increased, as it did rapidly after 1918, that the scale of manufacturing changed and most firms went out of business, leaving as the survivors those concerns which could adjust

themselves quickly to the changing economic situation.

The omni-presence of Mercedes-Benz - the successor to Daimler-Benz - cars in Europe is at the same time the story of a notable survivor of this cannibalistic process and striking evidence of the growing internationalisation of Europe's motor industry. Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot and Fiat cars rival pasta and vodka as symbols of the oneness of European culture.

Great Britain

Beaumaris; Beaumaris Gaol and Courthouse

It has been well said that the history of Europe is the history of its prisons. Certainly the punishments which a country inflicts and the conditions under which it holds its prisoners reflect fairly accurately the level of humanity which governs the behaviour of governments. Few European countries would have had reason to be proud of the overall standard of the living conditions in their prisons during the 18th and 19th centuries, but some countries were noticeably more worried about this than others. Many still take the historically normal view that society needs the discipline of a prison system and that those who break the law have no reason to complain about what happens to them in prison. To treat prisoners well is a mark of a very advanced society and, by this yardstick, Britain today is a considerably more backward community than, say, Sweden or Norway.

Just as Britain has far more military museums than any other country in Europe, so it has a much above the average number of prison and courthouse museums, nearly always in the original premises. This provides a most valuable insight into what were considered desirable methods of punishing and reforming convicted offenders at different periods. The prison at Beaumaris was built in 1829 and has remained practically unchanged since it was closed in 1878. Visitors can see the cells, including the punishment cell and the condemned cell, together with the treadwheel, which is the only one in Britain to survive on

its original site. An exhibition of documents illustrates prison life during the years when Beaumaris Gaol was functioning.

There is, regrettably, no association of European prison museums and no book or brochure which describes them all within a single volume. No one museum mentions another. Without such material, it is difficult, if not impossible, to make comparisons between museums and between countries and to learn all the lessons which are locked up in these museums.

Downe: Down House Darwin Museum

Down House - the place and the house are spelt differently - was the home of Charles Darwin, the great Victorian naturalist. Visitors can see his workroom, in which he wrote The Origin of Species, and the drawing room, with its original furnishings. There is an exhibition explaining the principles of Darwin's theory of evolution and the researches which provided the evidence on which it was based.

Darwin was one of the most influential scientists of the 19th century, but he was also a major unsettling force, causing particular problems for the many people in both Europe and America who held fundamentalist Christian beliefs. Most people have at least a vague idea of Darwin's theory of evolution, even in the distorted form of 'man is descended from monkeys', but few have any knowledge at all of the furore which his work caused among devout, if simple-minded, Christians, to whom the notion that God created all living creatures by a single act in their perfect and finished form was an article of faith. Europe is the poorer for having no museum or museum exhibition devoted to Darwin and to Darwinism which makes this point clear. It is normal to say that anthropology and zoology were never the same after The Origin of Species, but rare to find the rider which explains that neither was Christianity.

Cromford: Arkwright's Mill

In 1771 Richard Arkwright established the world's first successful

water-powered cotton-spinning mill at Cromford. After 200 years of industrial use, the Cromford Mills were bought by the Arkwright Society for restoration and preservation and a museum was installed in one of them. A number of places in Great Britain lay claim to being 'the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution' and Cromford has as good a claim as any. Once power had been applied to the textile industry, making factories not only possible but inevitable, a model of organisation had been provided for all industrial production to follow.

Europe has many early factories which have been saved from destruction and which are used as museums. What is sad about nearly all of them is the self-contained and nationalistic manner in which they are presented to the public. To think only of the textile industry, it is regrettable that visitors to textile mills in England are given no idea of the important textile industry which developed on a factory basis in northern Italy, Sweden, France and Germany in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, once the pioneering industrialists in Britain had shown the way. The process by which new technology spread from one country to another, particularly between 1750 and 1850, and the factors which inhibited or encouraged its international movement, is one of the most interesting features of European history and one which suitable museums are well placed to illustrate.

Greece

Athens: Byzantine Museum

There are too many archaeological museums in Greece, in the sense that the proportion of archaeological museums in the total is much too high. The balance is slowly being corrected by, for example, the establishment of the splendid Goulandris Natural History Museum on the outskirts of Athens and the equally enterprising Folk Art Museum at Nafplion, but there is a long way to go before either Greek children or Greek adults have the same museum opportunities that are taken for granted in a majority of European countries. It is worth noting that where change is taking place, the new museums are nearly always

the result of private enthusiasm and private money.

The problem is not, however, only one of the type of collection. Equally important is the way in which those collections are presented to the public. The Byzantine Museum is a case in point. One can hardly discuss Byzantium without discussing Turkey and that, in Greece, is a very difficult thing to do. The period of Turkish rule in Greece is still too close for comfort and peace of mind and it is not easy for museums to draw attention to Turkish culture in an objective way. The usual practice in museums is to display objects which are recognisably Turkish or which originated in the region which is now Turkey, but not to dig below the surface in order to explain their significance. The inevitable consequence is that a museum can have splendid collections, as in the case of the Byzantine Museum, but fail to place them in a sufficiently broad cultural and political context. A museum which has all the resources to make it truly and profoundly European is inhibited from doing so.

Kifissia: Goulandris Natural History Museum

Kifissia is an outer and fashionable suburb of Athens. During the 1970s Angelos and Niki Goulandris conceived the idea of giving Greece, at no cost to public funds, a natural history museum of international quality. No museum devoted to this subject previously existed in Greece and to have created a large modern museum within such a short time is by any standard a remarkable achievement.

During the years of planning, collecting and installing, much professional help and encouragement has come from other European countries, giving the museum a certain international quality from the beginning. Its founders saw their main mission as being to change the attitude of Greek people to the natural environment of their country. Previously, and partly for historical reasons, Greeks had shown little interest in such matters, and Mr and Mrs Goulandris realised that it would not be possible to remedy the situation within a short period. An educational function was, however, built into the museum from the day it opened and, by concentrating first on children, who would,

it was felt, be more likely to respond to new ideas, heartening progress has already been made.

Italy

Carrara: Museum of Marble

When they were able to choose, the Greek sculptors of antiquity selected Parian marble for their work and the Roman sculptors went to the quarries of Carrara. The medieval and later Italian sculptors did exactly the same. The marble from Paros and Carrara is of exceptional purity and whiteness and over the years very large quantities of both have been extracted. The museums, churches, cemeteries, palaces and mansions of Europe contain what could well be millions of tons of this wonderful material, the continent's most prestigious and almost certainly most expensive stone.

In their museums, the Greeks have given great prominence to objects made from Parian marble, although they rarely mention the name of the quarry. The Italians have done much better, with two museums at Carrara, one the National Exhibition of Marble, which has a complete collection of all the Italian marbles, and the other the Museum of Marble, which presents the history and techniques of the Carrara marble industry, explains how marble has been transported from the quarries from Roman times onwards, and describes the social, domestic and political life of the quarrymen and their families.

Florence: Uffizi Gallery

The Uffizi Gallery is one of the most celebrated art galleries in the world. It is also, like Florence itself, overwhelmed and suffocated by tourists for a large part of the year and it has neither the space, the money or the facilities to do proper justice either to its visitors or its collections. Potentially a prodigious source of public education, it finds increasing difficulty in carrying out this function and one

wonders what the ultimate solution is going to be. It is not, of course, the only art gallery in Europe to fnd itself in such a situation. The National Gallery in London, for instance, and the Orsay Museum in Paris are not infrequently much too crowded either for comfort or enlightenment.

What the Uffizi possesses is certainly stupendous. Its holdings of 13th-18th century Italian and foreign paintings include notable collections of works by Giotto, Botticelli, Bellini, Simone Martini, Masaccio, Piero della Francesca, Dürer, Holbein, Cranach, Michelangelo, Titian, Caravaggio, Veronese, Rubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt, as well as some fine examples of Greek sculpture, the Medici Venus among them. One can hardly criticise either the quantity or the quality of what is offered to the visitor. Two things are, however, missing. One is peace and quiet in which to enjoy what hangs on the walls. There are simply too many people pressing in on all sides. The other is a sense of where all these treasures come from and how they finally reached the Uffizi Gallery. In order to qualify as a modern and fully European museum, the Uffizi has to cease being so reticent about its social and political history. It is an historical as well as an artistic phenomenon.

Arquà Petrarca: Petrarch's House

It is difficult to think of anyone more European than the 14th-century Italian poet and humanist, Francesco Petrarca. Born in Arezzo, he grew up in Avignon, where his father, a Florentine lawyer, was in exile. He studied at Montpellier and Bologna, travelled extensively in Europe between 1330 and 1353, and was elected Poet Laureate in Rome in 1341. He wrote in both Latin and Italian, had a European influence as a lyric poet, perfected the sonnet, was an early and important humanist, collected manuscripts of works by Latin authors, including Cicero, and corresponded with learned men throughout Europe.

The museum is installed in the house which was his home and where he died in 1374 at the age of 70. The chair in which he died has been preserved and is on display. His former home became a

place of pilgrimage. The visitors' book contains the signatures of Mozart and Byron. To visit his house at Arquà is to enter the world of the early Renaissance.

Netherlands

Amsterdam: Museum of the Tropics

The major European colonial powers, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal, have made a poor job of telling the story of their former empires in museum terms. In each of these countries, different sections and aspects of the colonial past have been reflected in a number of museums, but none has made a thorough-going attempt to treat the subject as it deserves. The transfer of European habits to other continents and the exploitation of colonial territories for the benefit of the motherland is a subject of the first importance and one which is peculiarly European.

The usual method is to use maritime museums as a diplomatic channel for telling the public about voyaging for purposes of conquest, occupation and colonisation. The Dutch do this in their maritime museums in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the British at the National Maritime Museum in London, and France, Spain and Portugal have adopted similar tactics. The Dutch, at the Museum of the Tropics, have tried another approach, organising a museum which illustrates life in tropical and sub-tropical countries, prominent among which are, of course, the former Dutch colonial territories in the East Indies and elsewhere. The general failure of museums to grasp the colonial nettle firmly and to establish museums which place colonies within their political and historical context is regrettable and one hopes that a more adventurous policy will prevail in the future, since the export of Europe overseas is a highly important phase in the development of the continent and one which needs much more sophisticated public explanation than it has so far received. In particular, the fact that the Europeans have good reason to be proud of many of their colonial achievements needs to be publicised, although it is not easy to do, at a time when colonialism is still an obscene word among many people.

Utrecht: Catharine's Convent National Museum

This is one of the most significant museums to have been established in Europe since the Second World War. It presents the history of Christianity in the Netherlands from its beginnings until modern times, with fine collections of what might be termed religious appurtenances and other illustrative material from both the Catholic and the Protestant communities. To have set up the museum was an act of great courage, especially in a country where differences between the two groups of communities have often expressed themselves in so bitter a form.

No other country in Europe has such a museum, although there is a plentiful supply of museums dealing with such themes as religious art, monastic life, the Huguenots, Calvinism and the persecution of Protestants. The uniqueness of the Catharine's Convent Museum is curious, since the Christian component of the history of Europe transcends sectarianism and fully deserves the attention which the Dutch have given to it in this excellent and pioneering museum.

Norway

Bergen: Hanseatic Museum

The Hanseatic League, or Hanse, an association of North German trading towns, was formed in the 13th century to protect the interests of these towns overseas. By the mid-14th century it comprised nearly a hundred towns and was a powerful corporate body, which was able to conduct a number of trade wars with England and Denmark. Its influence declined as a result of the rise of the non-German Baltic states and changing trade routes and it was finally dissolved in 1669.

Several German seaports, and in particular Hamburg and Lübeck, have sections dealing with the Hanse, but only a non-German city, Bergen, has a complete museum dealing with the subject. An old house on the Quay has been restored, furnished and equipped to show what the country house and living quarters of one of the merchants engaged

in the Hanse trade was like in the 17th century. Such an important feature of European commercial life over a period of more than four centuries would seem to merit more comprehensive and more international treatment, possibly in the form of temporary or travelling exhibitions in the regions most closely connected with the Hanse trade.

Grimstad: Ibsen House

The museum is in a former apothecary's shop, where Henrik Ibsen worked as an assistant and where he began his writing career. It contains the original furnishings, together with a wide range of Ibsen memorabilia. In other parts of the building is a local museum, devoted to the history of the town of Grimstad.

Ibsen was and still is a writer of international repute. His plays have been read and produced all over Europe and beyond. The house at Grimstad is a place of pilgrimage for those who are interested in the man and his work and a visit to it certainly enriches one's understanding of his achievement and communicates the atmosphere of the small town in which he grew up. Grimstead is, however, not on a major tourist route, as Stratford-upon-Avon in England is, and one wonders to what extent the knowledge and appeal of Ibsen suffers as aresult. There is little justice in the matter of house-museums, and perhaps some special effort should be made, on a European scale, to produce a publicity booklet devoted to what one might call one-man museums, the birthplaces, living-places and death-places of Europe's great writers and artists, as a means of redressing the balance between the well-known and easy-to-visit museums and those which are less readily accessible.

Portugal

Lisbon: Ajuda National Palace

At one time Europe was characterised by its multiplicity of kings,

queens, princes and courts. There are now very few of them left, as functioning rulers and institutions, and most of yesterday's palaces have become museums of one kind and another. How far these museums succeed in communicating the atmosphere which once surrounded their owners and occupants is a difficult question to answer. In Portugal, the differences in wealth, comfort and security betwee the ruling class, as symbolised by the King and his family, and most of the rest of the populace was always immense. In the 19th century, Portuguese peasants would certainly have been overwhelmed and quite possibly angry, if they had had the opportunity to stroll around the Ajuda Palace in the way that their descendants can now do.

Two years ago, the present writer was served luncheon in the Palace. As an agreeable piece of public relations, he and his fellow guests sat at a table equipped for the occasion with gold plates and gold cutlery. He was a trifle disappointed to discover that the food tasted no different, but certainly he was impressed by the fact that such equipment existed at all in the Palace. In general, visitors to this very popular type of museum, of which there are many examples over an area stretching from Liningrad to the Atlantic coast of Europe, are not encouraged to place a palace in a social context. They are simply allowed to enter and to draw such conclusions as they please about the extent of royal or princely privilege in the days before revolution swept it all away. Not everyone, however, is capable of making the necessary imaginative effort and it would seem not unreasonable that every such museum should be supplied with easy-to-understand clues to the historical differences between the standard of living of the common people and their rulers.

Spain

Barcelona: Museum of Bullfighting

Spain has a number of museums of bullfighting and nowadays they, like the bullfights themselves, are the centre of considerable controversy.

The national pastime of watching specially-bred bulls being tortured and killed is of considerable antiquity and it is probably the only significant survival of the combats between men and animals which were popular in Roman times. The spectators at a Spanish bullfight have a pedigree which goes back at least 2000 years. The controversial aspect of these public shows is concerned with the accusation that such brutal public performances have no place in the world of the late 20th century, that they are an unde sirable legacy from more barbaric days, and that they show a contempt for the rights of animals. Those who defend them allege that they are a part of Spanish tradition, that they are essentially no different from a boxing match, and that animals have no rights.

The quarrel over bullfights is an excellent example of the profound changes which have taken place in European culture, especially during the past hundred years. Standards inevitably change and attitudes which were normal in 1890 seem barbaric today.

Gijón: International Guitar Museum

For good reasons, Spain is considered to be the natural home of the guitar. It is an instrument perfectly suited to the Spanish temperament, to the climate and to the language. Spain, one could almost say, has a traditional guitar culture. The spread of this culture, first to Central and South America and then, via pop music and amplification, to the whole world, is a social phenomenon of great importance. The guitar suggests an easy pace of life and a warm climate, in which work plays a small part and amorous behaviour is highly regarded. It symbolises perfectly the new world ethic, internationally favoured by young people everywhere.

The Museum in Gijón has old and modern guitars from Spain, as well as examples from other countries. To provide additional reality, it also includes a guitar-maker's workshop. Given a little more attention to the social and psychological connotations of the guitar, this could be very much a museum for Europe.

Sweden

Jokkmokk: Ájtte Mountain and Lapp Museum

This recently-established museum specialises in the natural history and culture of the mountain area of northern Sweden and it is the principal museum for the Sámi or Lapp culture in Sweden. From a European point of view, it is important for two reasons. It emphasises the responsible attitude towards the natural environment which has been shown by both the Swedish settlers and the Sámi people, who used the natural resources without destroying them. And it raises the question of how much attention should be given to minority cultures. Both problems are highly relevant to the whole of Europe. The museum at Jokkmokk adopts a crusading attitude towards the first problem. It makes no pretence of adopting a neutral position with regard to the use of natural resources. On the minority questiion, it has so far shown the Sámi as their national organisation would like them to be shown, heroic and oppressed. The museum has not felt it right to criticise the Sámi in any way. Whether this is a fair or fruitful way of dealing with the claims and rights of minorities is becoming a crucial question throughout Europe.

Stockholm: Museum of Medieval Stockholm

This very popular museum was opened in 1986, in underground galleries below the Parliament buildings. Sections of the early 16th-century wall and other monuments from the city's medieval period were discovered during excavations and form part of the museum. The museum is unashamedly impressionistic. It aims at communicating the atmosphere of medieval Stockholm as well as the facts. It mixes the authentic and the replica, fantasy and solid information, in a manner calculated to allow the average visitor to understand the spirit of the Middle Ages at the same time as he accumulates information about the period. It marks a final break with the didactic tradition and leaves members of the public entirely free to form their own impression. All aspects of life during the medieval period are touched on, its social life, its

technical skills, its housing, its shipping, its music, art and literature, its barbarities, its laws and punishments. There are no showcases. Everything is on open view and many of the exhibits can be walked round and seen from different angles. It is essentially educational, in the broadest sense, but the word 'education' is never used.

Switzerland

Luzern: Swiss Transport Museum

This is the national transport museum, but it is not run on public funds. It was founded in 1959 as a private association and is now one of the most comprehensive and successful transport museums in the world. It occupies a large site on the shores of Lake Luzern and, as a self-supporting enterprise, it has always needed to give careful thought to activities and features which are likely to attract the public, such as a planetarium - the only one in Switzerland - a circular screen cinema and a multi-media show on the history of space flight. There are large and well-patronised restaurants and a big shop. The museum itself illustrates the development of the Swiss transport system as a whole and in its social context, and includes sections on postal services, tourism and telecommunications.

It is exceptional among Europe's transport museums in explaining how changes in transport changed the nature of society and in this respect it offers a much-needed model for other countries to follow. From the financial point of view, too, it provides clues to the future of museums in Europe, especially their future within the mixed economy.

Bern: Swiss Alpine Museum

The British were the first to take seriously to Alpinism. The British Alpine Club was founded in 1857 and the Swiss Alpine Club followed six years later. The museum, established in 1905 on the initiative of the Swiss Club, contains exhibits showing the history and techniques

of Alpine climbing, as well as the plants and wildlife of the Alps and the living and working conditions of Swiss peasants in the mountain areas. The origins of Alpinism and the now highly organised winter sports industry in Switzerland are not, however, adequately explained. In the first half of the 19th century a number of the traditional Swiss industries, especially mining and ironworking, fell on hard times and it became necessary to discover other forms of employment. Tourism proved to be the ideal solution. It made use of Switzerland's more obvious natural resources, mountains, lakes and snow, it was labour intensive, it employed both men and women, and it attracted well-to-do people from abroad, who in their turn brought much-needed foreign currency, with which Switzerland could re-equip its old industries and establish new ones. It also allowed the Swiss to build up a reputation as the best hoteliers in the world, which made Swiss-trained hotel staff a useful export commodity.

With three major languages, much sought after banking facilities, and an up-market tourist trade, politically neutral Switzerland is quite possibly the most European country in Europe and certainly the country which makes most profit out of its Europeanism.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY

Museums all over Europe are long past the stage at which they can be allowed to slumber as mere safe-deposits for local and national treasures. This was possible only in the days of cheap labour and low public expectation. To attract visitors today it is necessary to present one's collections in an attractive manner and to pay careful consideration to the comfort and needs of visitors. This inevitably costs money and the continuous search for finance wherever it is to be found is a major characteristic of museums today which did not exist a hundred or even fifty years ago, when sponsorship was virtually unknown, as were such profitable sidelines as museum shops and restaurants, and when sources of income and capital were limited to central and local government grants, legacies and donations.

Museums of all types and sizes are under ever-increasing pressure to prove that they are useful institutions. This, in practice, means that they must be able to show a steadily increasing number of visitors each year. In the market economy which prevails today a decline in the number of a museum's visitors spells failure. The investment is not yielding the required dividend.

The public does not need museums, in the way that it needs electricity, a roof and a water supply. In this sense, all cultural pursuits are luxuries. Moreover, to indulge in them is purely voluntary, except in the case of schoolchildren, who can occasionally be ordered to take part. The first duty of museums is therefore to find ways of persuading people to come to them. This is accomplished through publicity and public relations, through social behaviour - doing what one's friends do - and through pride in being different, in belonging to an élite. Once inside the museum, what is offered in the way of atmosphere and exhibits must be acceptable. Otherwise a second visit is unlikely to take place.

It may well be true that museums provide wonderful opportunities for self-education, but this process cannot operate until people are actually inside the museum. And, since everyone has only a limited amount of leisure time, attending a museummust normally mean deciding not to do something else. There are always good reasons why one should not visit a museum. But, even so, the situation is not a hopeless one. Large numbers of people are anxious to broaden their minds and deepen their understanding. They are willing to try something new and, if they like it, to tell their friends. Publicity by word of mouth is usually the most effective.

It is a truism that those who need education most are the least likely to seek it and it is unrealistic to expect any great change in either the kind or the numbers of people who go fairly regularly to museums. What is certain, however, is that museums would greatly benefit from transforming the meaning of the term, 'Friends of the Museum'. It is not so much the museum that needs friends as the museum visitors. The kind of museum Friends who help to find money for

the museum or who provide volunteer services of various kinds performs a useful enough task. What is more and more needed today, however, is a Friend who is a friend, a welcomer who knows how to identify people who feel lost in the museum and who need no more than a little conversation to make them feel at home. In their rather different way, the best museum educators perform precisely this task with children. They break down the barrier of strangeness between the child and the museum. Any 'teaching' function is quite subsidiary to this.

Where the two Council of Europe conferences, Nature Museums in 1989 and Museums: Treasures or Tools? succeeded was in making people think more radically abou the problem of using, rather than merely safeguarding, museum collections. Where they failed was in paying too much respect to the views of professional museum educators and in not challenging their views in a more determined and concrete way. The voice of the general public was too weak and too infrequently heard. That should be the subject of a third conference, which might well be called Museums: the real and the imagined public need.